

2005 UMP Provider Satisfaction Survey

Summary of Results

In 2005, the Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) conducted a survey of its network providers, including physicians, mental health providers, and rehabilitation therapy specialists (physical, occupational and speech therapists, and chiropractors). Survey participants were asked to rate UMP, both separately and in comparison to other health plans, in the following areas—provider relations, utilization management, pharmacy benefits, and financial aspects.

UMP's goals for the survey included getting feedback on what providers think of UMP, track UMP's progress since the last provider survey in 2002, and measure providers' knowledge of and interest in UMP initiatives.

What Providers Like About UMP

Overall, the results were favorable—more than 82% of all three provider groups rated UMP as either “excellent” or “very good.” Areas that received high ratings include responsiveness of provider relations and medical review staff, accuracy of claims processing, quick resolution of credentialing problems, and a low “hassle factor.” We attribute these positive ratings in part to our work with the Washington Health Care Forum's initiative to standardize billing requirements and claims processing practices among health plans in Washington. We also focused on streamlining our credentialing and contracting processes since the last survey in 2002.

Online Services Are in Demand

The report identified a growing awareness of and demand for online services for providers. UMP currently offers free online access to enrollee eligibility information and claims status look-up through **OneHealthPort.com**. More than two-thirds of physicians who were aware of OneHealthPort used the service and reported that it saved staff time. Moreover, the use of the Web site was associated with higher levels of satisfaction among physicians.

Thirty percent of providers responding indicated interest in additional options for submitting claims electronically. In 2006, UMP is planning to expand services available for online claims submission.

Boost Acceptance of State Preferred Drug List

Another priority identified by the survey is the need to increase providers' acceptance of the State Preferred Drug List (PDL), which UMP is required to follow. Only 60% of physicians were familiar with the State PDL, and less than 35% of those who were aware of it had endorsed it.

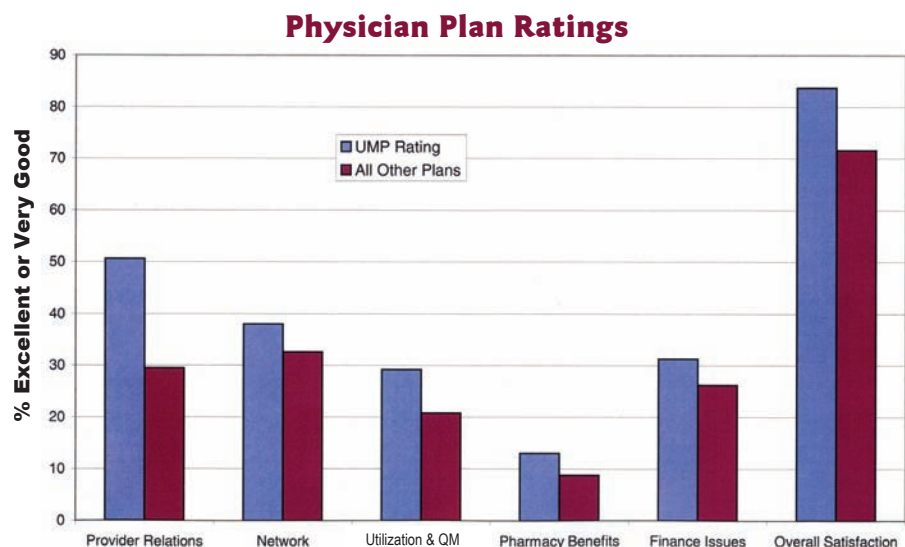
A key feature of the State PDL is the Therapeutic Interchange Program (TIP), which is intended to reduce the administrative hassle for prescribers in choosing affordable medications for their patients. The program allows pharmacists to automatically substitute equally effective but less expensive drugs for more expensive nonpreferred drugs in the same drug class. However, TIP only “works” when the prescribing provider has endorsed the PDL. UMP will continue to collaborate with the Washington State Prescription Drug Program to help raise awareness of this cost-saving program. (See www.rx.wa.gov for more information.)

Survey Methods

About 3200 providers were asked to participate. Of those, 1070 providers responded for a total response rate of 33%. Results were grouped by the major respondent categories—physicians, mental health providers (including psychiatrists), and rehabilitation therapy specialists.

Physicians were surveyed by practice location, meaning one survey per practice. In most cases, the survey was filled out by an office manager. Physician survey results were “weighted” according to how many UMP patient encounters that particular practice had in the previous year. In this way, practices that serve a higher number of UMP enrollees had a proportionally higher impact on scores. Results for both weighted and unweighted physician responses were compared to each other. With few exceptions, the weighted results rated UMP more favorably in all categories than the unweighted. This indicates that practices with higher UMP patient volumes are more satisfied than those with fewer UMP patients. All of the data presented in this summary are from the weighted sample.

UMP’s ratings were also compared with national benchmarking data provided by the consultant, where appropriate.

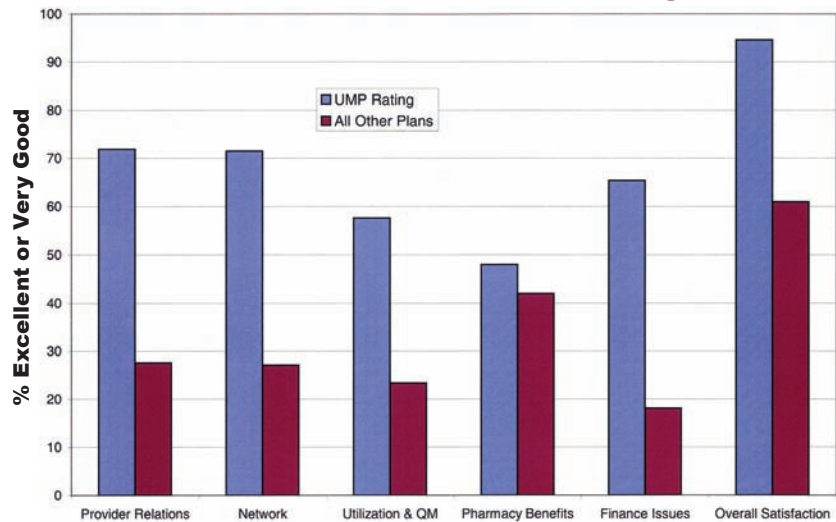


Legend: The numbers along the vertical axis show the percentage of respondents who rated UMP as either “excellent” or “very good” in the major categories shown on the horizontal axis. For example, 52% of respondents rated UMP as excellent or very good in Provider Relations, while 29% rated other plans as excellent or very good.

Key Findings—Physicians

- **Overall:** 83.7% of physicians reported they were satisfied with UMP overall. This score was significantly higher than how survey respondents rated all other plans.
- **Provider Relations:** Providers were most satisfied with UMP’s provider relations, rating UMP significantly higher than all other plans in responsiveness of provider relations staff, the contracting process, and credentialing.
- **Loyalty:** 96% of physicians would recommend UMP to other providers. This rating was significantly higher than national benchmark scores.
- **Drug Benefits:** While physicians tended to rate UMP prescription drug benefits and formulary low, the scores in this area weren’t significantly different than how these physicians rated other plans’ drug benefits.
- **Financial:** UMP rated significantly higher than all other plans in the area of claims processing accuracy. Overall, UMP scores for reimbursement rates weren’t significantly different than for other plans; however, specialists tended to be less satisfied with UMP reimbursement than primary care providers.

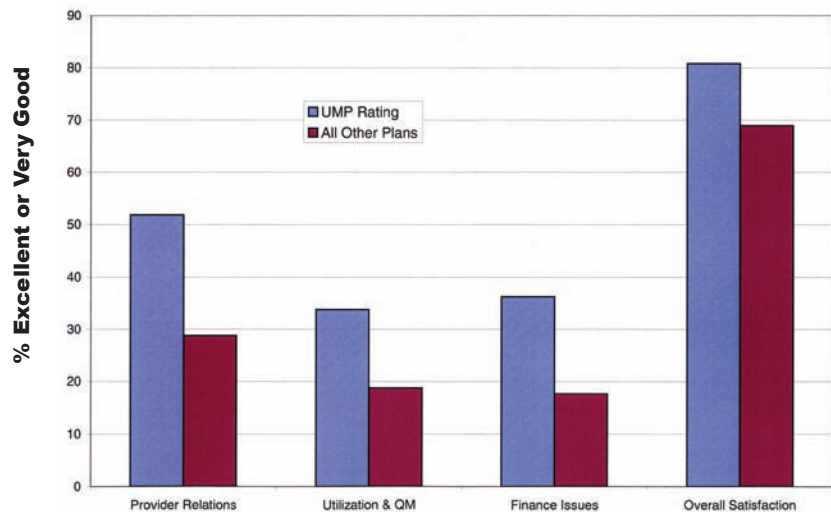
Mental Health Provider Ratings



Key Findings—Mental Health Providers

- Mental health providers were the most satisfied with UMP as compared to the physician and rehabilitation groups. They rated UMP significantly higher than all other plans in the areas of provider relations, network, utilization management, claims processing, and reimbursement.
- **Overall:** 94.6% of mental health providers are satisfied with UMP overall, compared to 61% who are satisfied with all other plans.
- **Financial:** 70% of mental health providers rated UMP's reimbursement rates as being excellent or very good, compared to 11% for all other plans' reimbursement rates.

Rehabilitation Specialist (Non-MD) Ratings



Key Findings—Rehabilitation Therapy Specialists

- This group rated UMP significantly higher than all other plans in the areas of provider relations, claims processing, and reimbursement.
- **Loyalty:** 92% of providers would recommend UMP to other providers and to patients.
- **Utilization and Financial:** Approximately 25% of rehabilitation therapy specialists were dissatisfied in areas related to utilization management, reimbursement, and billing requirements. In the written comments, chiropractors expressed frustration with limits on chiropractic visits and reimbursement rates.

What's Next?

Survey results, including written comments, were analyzed to help identify areas for improvement. UMP has several initiatives underway designed to enhance our level of service to providers, including:

- **Appeals**—As part of a new contract with our third-party administrator (TPA), UMP has established standards for quicker turnaround on provider reconsiderations and enrollee appeals—80% will be handled within 14 days. The TPA will be adding two new staff positions in its Medical Review Department to speed up preauthorizations and appeals.
- **Reimbursement Policy Changes for Rehabilitation Therapy Specialists**—Physical therapists no longer need to submit a treatment plan with every claim. They now just need to keep one on file as it may be periodically requested. Also, UMP is actively working toward a solution to remove payment system constraints that inconsistently reimburse for billing units.
- **Coding Enhancements**—UMP is updating its payment policies to be more consistent with the National Correct Coding Initiative (NCCI). This will translate into coding edits that are more in line with industry standards by fall 2005. This should reduce the number of provider appeals in these circumstances.
- **Online Claims Processing**—Based on the interest expressed by many survey respondents, UMP is planning to offer providers the opportunity to submit claims online through Office Ally. (UMP will continue to accept electronic claims from other Internet claims clearinghouses.)
- **Electronic Formulary**—By late fall 2005, prescribers will be able to download UMP's Preferred Drug List from the Internet to their personal digital assistants (PDAs) using Epocrates Rx. This service provides easy access to information about the PDL such as which drugs are subject to TIP, prior-authorization, or quantity level limits.

We will continue to review results and identify additional areas for improvement and respond to follow-up requests. UMP is profoundly grateful to those providers who took the time to let us know how we can improve!